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تفسير الأنوار البيان

ILLUMINATING DISCOURSES
on the
NOBLE QURAN

TAFSIR ANWARUL BAYAN

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DARUL-ISHAAT
Karachi-Pakistan.

سورة الفاتحه

Makkan	Surah Al-Fātihah	Verses 1-7
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (2) الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ (3) مَلِكِ يَوْمِ
الدِّينِ (4) إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ (5) اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ
الْمُسْتَقِيمَ (6) صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ
وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ (7)

(1) In the name of Allāh, the Beneficent, the Most Merciful. (2) All praise is only for Allāh, the Lord of the universe, (3) The Beneficent, the Most Merciful, (4) Master of the Day of Retribution. (5) Only You do we worship, and only You do we ask for help. (6) Guide us upon the straight path, (7) The path of those whom You have favoured, not the path of those who have incurred Your wrath, nor those who have gone astray.

THE NAMES AND VIRTUES OF SURAH AL-FĀTIHAH.

Some commentators are of the opinion that Surah Al-Fātihah was revealed in Makkah. Others say that it was revealed in Madinah, while a third group maintain that it was revealed twice – once in Makkah, and again in Madinah.

Of the many names attributed to this Surah, the most famous is that of Al-Fātihah. The tafsīr, “Al Itqān” reports as many as 25 names for this Surah. Some of these names are as follows:

- 📖 Fātihahtul Kitāb (The Opening of the Book).
- 📖 Fātihahtul Qur’ān (The Introduction of the Qur’ān).
- 📖 Ummul Kitāb (The Mother of the Book).
- 📖 Ummul Qur’ān (The Mother of the Qur’ān)
- 📖 As Sab ‘ul Mathāni (The Seven Oft-Repeated Verses).
- 📖 Surahtul Mathāni (The Chapter of Supplication).

📖 *Surahtus Suwāl (The Chapter of Entreaty).*

📖 *Surahtul Hamd (The Chapter of Praise).*

📖 *Surahtush Shukr (The Chapter of Gratitude).*

Allāh mentions Surah Al-Fātihah in verse 87 of Surah Hijr, "Verily We have granted you seven verses that are often repeated, and the glorious Qur'ān."

Imām Bukhari رحمه الله عليه writes (v.2, p.642) that Surah Al-Fātihah is called Ummul Kitāb because it is written at the beginning of all manuscripts of the Qur'ān and because salāh begins with its recitation. A great virtue of this Surah is that it is recited in all rakāh of Salāh.

Bukhari (v.2, p.642) reports that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said that Surah Al-Fātihah is the greatest Surah in the Qur'ān.

Tirmidhi reports that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "By Allāh! Such a Surah (*Al-Fātiḥah*) has not been revealed in the Torah, nor in the Injil, nor in the Zabūr, nor in the Qur'ān."

The Mustadrak of Hākim reports that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم called Surah Al-Fātihah the best of the Qur'ān. [*Durrul Manthūr*, v.1, p.5]

Certain Ahādith have mentioned that Surah Al-Fātihah is equivalent to two thirds of the Qur'ān. [*Ibid*]

Sayyidina Abu Umāmah رضي الله عنه reports from the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم that only four things were revealed from the treasures that lie beneath Allāh's Throne. These are (1) Ummul Kitāb, (2) Ayatul Kursi, (3) the concluding verses of Surah Al-Baqarah, (4) Surah Kauthar. [*Ibid*]

Sayyidina Mujāhid رحمه الله عليه narrates that the accursed Iblis cried on the following four occasions:

📖 *When Surah Al-Fātihah was revealed.*

📖 *When Allāh declared him to be accursed.*

📖 *When he was banished to the earth.*

📖 *When the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم was commissioned.*

Muslim (v.1, p.271) reports that Jibrīl عليه السلام was once sitting with the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم when a thunderous sound was heard from the sky. Looking towards the sky, Jibrīl عليه السلام said that a door of the heavens was opened, which was never opened before.

When an angel descended from it, Jibrīl عليه السلام said that this angel has never descended to earth before. The angel came to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم and said, "Listen to the glad tidings that two celestial lights will be revealed to you, which have never been granted to any other Prophet before you: (1) Fātiḥatul Kitāb and (2) the concluding verses of Surah Al-Baqarah. Allāh will certainly fulfil the request made when reciting these verses." (These are both Du'ās, and will be accepted because Allāh has Himself advised them.)

The tafsīr "Itqān" mentions that Surah Al-Fātihah is a collection of all the

themes contained in the Qur'ān, thereby serving as an introduction for them all. This is so because all previous religions (*Dīns*) and the Qur'ān contain the four fundamental sciences:

I. The science of principles. This comprises of the following three aspects:

- 📖 *Understanding the attributes of Allāh, which are mentioned in the first two verses of Surah Al-Fātihah.*
- 📖 *Prophethood, which is alluded to in the verse "The path of those whom You have favoured."*
- 📖 *Judgment day, which is referred to in the verse "Master of the Day of Retribution."*

II. The science of worship. This is referred to in the verse "Only You do we worship."

III. The science of patronage i.e. making oneself subservient to the injunctions of the Shari'ah. This is contained in the verses 'only you do we ask for help' and "Guide us upon the straight path."

IV. The science of narratives which relates to the incidents of previous nations. The purpose is to gain lessons from their experiences, leading people to emulate the good folk and to discard the behaviour of the evil folk. This purpose is contained in the verse "The path of those whom You have favoured, not the path of those who have incurred Your wrath, nor those who have gone astray." [verse 6]

Muslim (v.1, p. 170) has reported from the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم that Allāh says, "I have divided the Salāh (i.e. one of the most important aspects of Salāh) in half between My slave and Myself. My slave shall receive whatever he asks for. When he recites, "All praise is only for Allāh, the Lord of the universe," I say, "My slave has praised Me."

"When he recites, "The Beneficent, the Most Merciful," I say, "My slave has lauded Me." When he recites, "Master of the Day of Retribution," I say, "My slave has glorified Me." When he recites, "Only You do we worship, and only you do we ask for help," Allāh says, "This is between My slave and Me. My slave shall have what he asks for." This means that the person has acknowledged the fact that he should worship only Allāh. He has thus made himself worthy of attaining Allāh's mercy and forgiveness by absolving himself from Polytheism. He has also understood and announces that help must be sought only from Allāh.

Thereafter, when the person in Salāh recites, "Guide us upon the straight path, the path of those whom You have favoured, not the path of those who have incurred Your wrath, nor those who have gone astray," Allāh says, "This is for My slave. He shall receive whatever he asks for."

RECITATION OF THE TA'AWUDH AND TASMIYYAH.

Whenever a person commences with the recitation of the Qur'ān, he must recite, "A'ūdhu Billahi Minash Shaytān Nir Rajīm" ("I seek refuge with Allāh from

Satan/Devil (*Shaytān*), the accursed.") This phrase is referred to as the Ta'awwudh). Allāh says in Surah Nahl, "When you recite the Qur'ān, seek refuge with Allāh from Satan / Devil (*Shaytān*), the accursed."

After reciting the Ta'awwudh, one should recite the Tasmiyyah i.e. "Bismillah hir Rahmān nir Rahīm." Whenever a person wants to occupy a home, he must first rid the home of harmful influences, only then can he decorate the house and make it liveable. In a similar manner, a person has first to remove the evil influences of Satan/Devil (*Shaytān*) from his heart before reciting the Qur'ān. It is for this reason that he recites "A'ūdhu Billahi Minash Shaytān Nir Rajīm." Thereafter, he decorates his heart with Allāh's name when he recites "Bismillah Hir Rahmān nir Rahīm".

"Bismillah hir Rahmān nir Rahīm" should also be recited before reciting all Surahs of the Qur'ān, with the exception of Surah Barā'ah, where the Tasmiyyah will not be recited after completing Surah Anfāl and commencing Surah Barā'ah (Surah Tawbsah) (the details of this will be mentioned in the exegesis of Surah Barā'ah, Insha Allāh).

According to Imām Abu Hanifah رحمه الله عليه, the Tasmiyyah is actually a verse of the Qur'ān, which was revealed to separate the various Surahs. However, it does not form part of these Surahs. It is only a part of Surah Naml, which includes the actual words "Bismillah Hir Rahmān nir Rahīm" in the second bowing (ruku).

Since the entire *Ummah* is unanimous about the fact that Surah Al-Fātihah consists of seven verses, certain Scholars (Ulama) [like Imām Shafī'ī رحمه الله عليه] say that "Bismillah hir Rahmān nir Rahīm" forms the first of these seven verses. According to other Ulama (like Imām Abu Hanifah رحمه الله عليه), the seventh verse of Surah Al-Fātihah is "Not the path of those who have incurred Your wrath, nor those who have gone astray." [Ma'alimut Tanzeel v.1, p.39]

Sayyidina Abdullah bin Umar رضي الله عنه reports that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم did not know when a Surah ends till "Bismillah hir Rahmān nir Rahīm" was revealed. When it was revealed, the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم knew exactly when a Surah terminated. [Durrul Manthur, v.1, p7]

"Ma'alimut Tanzil" reports that the appearance of the Tasmiyyah before every Surah is to teach man that he should recite it every time he begins a Surah. This forms part of the etiquette of Qur'ānic recitation.

ALL PRAISE IS FOR ALLĀH, THE LORD OF THE UNIVERSE

The first three verses of Surah Al-Fātihah mention some of Allāh's attributes. Since Allāh possesses all these attributes and more, "All praise must exclusively be His. These praises include All praise that has been offered, or will be offered in this world and in the Hereafter. Even the praises lauded to others will ultimately accrue to Allāh, because He created them all and nurtured them.

The Arabic letter "Lām" used in the verse denotes that these praises are exclusive to Allāh, and they can only be attributed to Him. Therefore, even if anyone does not praise Allāh, it will not diminish His praiseworthiness in any way.

THE MEANING OF "LORD OF THE UNIVERSE"

The Arabic word "*Rabb*" refers to a master and one who nurtures [*Ma'alimut Tanzeel*]. Both these meanings apply simultaneously because Allāh is both the Master and the Nurturer of the entire universe.

The Arabic word "*Aalamīn*" (translated above as 'universe) refers to all Allāh's creation. It has been derived from the source word "*ilm*" (knowledge). It has been named such because All species of creation are knowledgeable of Allāh's existence, since they are all signs of his existence. After seeing the innumerable creations of Allāh, only a fool will fail to realise that Allāh is the Creator. The declaration that Allāh is the Lord of the universe dispels the belief of many nations who worship other gods.

Sayyidina Muqātil bin Hibān رحمه الله عليه says that the universe comprises 80,000 creatures. Of these, 40,000 are on land, while the other 40,000 are marine.

Sayyidina Wahb Bin Munabbih رحمه الله عليه says that the creation comprises 18,000 species. However, the correct opinion is that which has been expressed by Sayyidina Ka'b Aḥbār رحمه الله عليه. He says that the true figure of Allāh's creation is known only to Allāh Himself. In support of his statement, Sayyidina Ka'b رضي الله عنه quoted the verse where Allāh says, "*None besides Allāh knows His armies.*" [*Ma'alimut Tanzīl*, v.1, p.40]

Allāh has not only created the creation, but He has also arranged for their nourishment and means of living. By means of food and drink, Allāh sustains the lives of all creatures, allowing them to grow and develop. Man is left astonished at Allāh's system of sustaining His creation. No creature is deprived of its sustenance from Allāh, even if the sustenance has to be imported from another continent.

The attribute of nurturing included in the word 'Lord' also includes spiritual nurturing. Allāh also sustains the soul, which is the essence of life.

THE BENEFICENT, THE MOST MERCIFUL

Both the words mentioned in this verse are in the superlative sense and share the same meaning. However, certain commentators say that the word "*Rahmān*" has a more intensified meaning of compassion than the word "*Rahīm*". While the word "*Rahmān*" can only be used to describe Allāh, the word "*Rahīm*" may be used to describe the creation as well. Allāh's mercy and compassion are witnessed daily, because He sustains and provides for the entire creation.

MASTER OF THE DAY OF RETRIBUTION

This refers to the Day of Qiyamah, when people will receive the rewards or punishment for the deeds that they carry out in this world. None shall be able to intercede without His permission on that day. Allāh says in another verse, "*True sovereignty will belong to Rahmān on that day.*" Allāh also says, "*No soul will be of any avail to another All matters will be His on that day.*"

Allāh will not only be the Judge on the Day of Judgment but He will be the Master of that day. It occurs in this world that a judge passes Judgment, but he is still bound by the laws of the state and cannot pass Judgment contrary to the

statute. Allāh will decide according to His decrees, and none can dictate to Him. None can veto His decision, nor can an appeal be lodged against it.

Even the animals and the mighty emperors of this world will be lined up before Allāh. He will pass Judgment on to all of them, whereafter the decision will be binding.

ONLY ALLĀH CAN BE WORSHIPPED AND ONLY HE CAN COME TO ONE'S AID.

Once a person has accepted and acknowledged Allāh's attributes as mentioned above, he cannot restrain himself from saying to Allāh, *"Only You do we worship, and only You do we ask for help."* Realizing this, he then beseeches Allāh to grant him what he requires most, viz. guidance to the straight path.

Although the person reciting Surah Al-Fātihah may be a single individual, the plural form is used in this supplication (i.e. the word "we" instead of 'I'). This denotes that all of creation is dependent on Allāh, Who is the deity of all of them, even the Polytheists (*Mushrikīn*) amongst them. The person reciting Surah Al-Fātihah is therefore making the announcement on behalf of all creation.

Since Allāh possesses all the necessary attributes and capabilities, only He can truly assist any person in need. Supplicating to others for help will be contrary to the demand of this verse. This verse negates Polytheism (*shirk*) in worship, as well as Polytheism (*shirk*) in supplication.

THE PRAYER (DU'Ā) TO BE GUIDED ON THE STRAIGHT PATH (SIRĀTUL MUSTAQIM)

"Guide us upon the straight path." Guidance implies walking the path of the truth. Guidance is among the things a person requires from Allāh when he seeks help from Him. Guidance is really the greatest bounty because, without it, a person will suffer eternally in Hell even though one may have enjoyed all the pleasures of this world.

A person may ask himself why would someone who performs his *Salāh* and recites the Qur'ān be required to Prayer for guidance? Is he not guided already? The reply to this is that a person is required to pray to Allāh to keep one steadfast upon the straight path until death. Therefore, with regard to such a person, the prayer in Surah Al-Fātihah will be a supplication for steadfastness. Allāh has also advised the Believers (*Mu'minīn*) to pray as follows: *"Our Lord, cause not our hearts to stray after You have guided us and bestow on us Your mercy, for verily You are the Bestower."* [Surah Al Imrān, verse 8]

WHO ARE THOSE WHO TREAD THE STRAIGHT PATH?

Many people claim to be following the straight path. However, Allāh describes that straight path as *"The path of those whom You have favoured."* In verse 69 of Surah Nisā, Allāh describes who are those whom He has favoured. Allāh says, *"Whoso obeys Allāh and His messenger then they will be with those upon whom Allāh has favoured, from the Prophets (Anbiyā), Martyrs (shuhada) and righteous (sālihīn). These are indeed the best of companions."* Therefore, the path treaded by these people will be regarded as the straight path (*Sirātul Mustaqim*).

"...not the path of those who have incurred Your wrath, nor those who have gone astray." This also describes the favoured ones because they are those who refrain from incurring Allāh's wrath and who have not wandered astray.

Ibn Kathīr رحمه الله عليه has reported certain narrations wherein the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم referred to the Jews as "those who have incurred Your wrath" and the Christians as "those who have gone astray." This interpretation has also been reported by Sayyidina Abdullah-bin Abbās رضى الله عنه and Sayyidina Abdullah bin Masūd رضى الله عنه.

Allāh says in Surah Al-Baqarah that the Jews "earned wrath upon wrath" [verse 90]

Allāh says in Surah Mā'idah, "Do not follow the whims of a nation who have strayed from before, have misled others, and have themselves strayed from the straight path." [verse 77]

The Jews flouted Allāh's commands and opposed the truth even though they possessed knowledge of the truth. The Christians, though they were not as learned, regarded themselves as devout worshippers. They devised their own acts of devotion and took to monasticism, secluding themselves in mountains and enduring many hardships in the process. However, failing to practice despite possessing the relevant knowledge is a serious crime. It is for this reason that the Jews have incurred Allāh's wrath.

Ibn Kathīr رحمه الله عليه has written that in contrast to the above two nations, the Believers (Mu'minīn) should be people who possess the relevant knowledge and also practice upon it. He writes that although the Jews and the Christians have both incurred Allāh's wrath, and have both wandered astray, the Jews are especially despised. On the other hand, the Christians have been specifically termed as having strayed because of their misguided behaviour.

The mischief and rebelliousness of the Jews is discussed in detail in Surah Al-Baqarah and other Surahs. Each incident demonstrates how they continually and purposely invited Allāh's wrath upon themselves. Therefore, the Muslims have been advised to pray to Allāh in all Salāh to save themselves from following the ways of the Jews and the Christians. Muslims should now ponder if they are actually averse to the ways of the Jews and Christians as they should, and if they are closely emulating the lifestyles of the favoured servants of Allāh.

In their mannerisms, attire, politics, business, lifestyles and, in fact, in all way, Muslims ape the behaviour of the Jews and Christians. Even reputable and righteous people ape their ways despite reciting Surah Al-Fātihah in all Rakāh of their Salāh. Sages have mentioned that the qualities of the Jews will enter Muslim scholars who deviate, while the qualities of Christians will enter the lives of the general Muslim public when they deviate. May Allāh save us all. Āmīn.

Apart from the ways of those described as 'favoured', the ways of all other people are regarded as deviant. It will therefore be necessary for all Muslims to stay clear of them, irrespective of their political or religious status. Muslims have been encouraged in this verse to stay aloof from the Jews and Christians because of the danger of inclining towards them. It is necessary that the ways of the Polytheists (Mushrikīn) and atheists remain reprehensible to all Muslims.

The description, instead of the names of these two religious factions have been mentioned in the verse for the following two reasons:

1. To depict that deviation from the ways of the Prophets (*Anbiya*) عليهم السلام, the righteous and the martyrs will lead one astray and earn Allāh's wrath.
2. To illustrate that emulating the ways of others like the Jews and the Christians will also lead one to Allāh's wrath.

THE RECITATION OF "AMĪN."

It is sunnah to recite Āmin' after Surah Al-Fātihah, while performing Salāh and even when not performing Salāh. The meaning of Āmin is Oh Allāh! Do accept. Therefore, two prayers (*Du'ās*) are being made, the first being The Prayer (*Du'ā*) itself, and the second being the Prayer (*Du'ā*) for the acceptance of one's Prayer (*Du'ā*) i.e. the recitation of Āmin.

"*Mālimut Tanzil*" (v.1, p.42) reports that "Āmin" should be recited a little while after the concluding words of Surah Al-Fātihah so that it may not be confused as being part of the Surah. The word Āmin is not written in the Qur'ān because it is not part of the Qur'ān.

Sayyidah Aysa رضي الله عنها reports from the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم that the thing which the Jews envy most is the recitation of Āmin.

Sayyidina Abu Hurairah رضي الله عنه reports from the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم that the Jews envy the following three things of the Muslims:

1. Greeting everyone;
2. Forming saffs (rows,) when performing Salāh;
3. Saying 'Āmin

Note: Some non-Muslims have raised the objection that it is improper for Allāh to praise Himself. Commentators have mentioned that Surah Al-Fātihah is actually meant to be a praise for Allāh on the lips of the Believers (*Mu'minīn*). Therefore, the Surah is preceded by the silent phrase, 'Say!' wherein Allāh instructs people to hymn His praises. They say that this is the reason why the second half of the Surah is spoken by the first person.

However, while this reply may suffice for Surah Al-Fātihah, it is not sufficient to reply to the many other verses of the Qur'ān where Allāh praises Himself. It will also not reply to the same objection when raised with regard to a hadith, wherein the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم states, "Oh Allāh! I cannot praise You sufficiently. You are as You have praised Yourself."

The reply to this question is that the Creator cannot be judged by the standards of the creation. While the creation cannot praise themselves, Allāh has all rights to do so because He is most deserving of all praises.

Man has been forbidden from praising himself because it would lead to pride and haughtiness. This will eventually lead him to forget Allāh's greatness. On the other hand, none can ever come close to competing with Allāh, let alone supersede Him. If He praises Himself, it cannot lead to any evil. While a proud

person merely pretends to be perfect, Allāh is Perfect and the Absolute Greatest. Therefore, the terms used for man cannot apply to Him.

SURAH AL-FĀTIHAH IS A CURE.

One of the names of Surah Al-Fātihah is. "Shāfiyah' i.e. the curer. Just as the words spiritually heal the heart of a Believers (Muminin) it also heals the physical body. Sayyidina Sā'ib bin Yazid رضى الله عنه reports that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم once recited Surah Al-Fātihah and blew on him so that he may be saved from diseases.

Sayyidina Abu Sa'id Khudri رضى الله عنه says that Surah Al-Fātihah is an effective antidote for poisons.

Sayyidina Abdul Malik bin Umair رضى الله عنه narrates that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, "Fātihahtul Kitāb is a cure for All thing." [Durrul Manthūr]

The book "Hisnul Hasin' reports from Abu Dawūd and Nasai, who say that Surah Fātihah should be repeatedly recited upon a mentally deranged person in the mornings and evenings. The person reciting it should then blow on the patient (in a manner that a few droplets of saliva also fall on the patient). This will, Insha Allāh, will be a cure.

Tirmidhi reports that Surah Al-Fātihah should be recited seven times upon one smitten by a scorpion or snake.

Sayyidina Abdullāh bin Abbās رضى الله عنه reports that some Companions (Sahābah) رضى الله عنهم were once on a journey, when a person from a nearby locality was stung by a scorpion. The locals asked the Companions (Sahābah) رضى الله عنهم whether any of them knew of any cure. One of the Companions (Sahābah) رضى الله عنهم recited Surah Al-Fātihah and blew on the person, thereby curing him. He was rewarded with some goats in lieu of this service.

When his companions saw him returning with the goats, they disliked it because they felt that he had acquired wealth by using Allāh's Book. When they reported the matter to the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم, he said, 'Allāh's Book is the most worthy of acquiring wealth from all things whereby you acquire wealth." [Bukhari, v.2, p.854]

RECITING SURAH AL-FĀTIHAH FOR SAFETY AT NIGHT

Sayyidina Anas رضى الله عنه reports that the Holy Prophet صلى الله عليه وسلم said, 'When any of you lies down to rest at night, he will be safe from all things besides death if he recites "Fātihahtul Kitāb" and "Qul Huw Allāhu Ahad (Surah Ikhlās)." [Durrul Manthūr]

